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transfer has been accomplished in the manufacturing and mechanical industries. One does not have to agree with the author on all points in order to find a great deal of interest in his study.

W. F. WILLOUGHBY.

Lohnpolitik und Lohntheorie mit besonderer Berücksichtigung des Minimallohnes. Von DR. OTTO VON ZWIEDENECK-SÜDENHORST. Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1900. 8vo, pp. xiii + 410.

DR. ZWIEDENECK offers here a project for relieving laborers who work for "starvation wages" by the establishment of minimum rates of wages through the joint activity of labor organizations and the public authority. Legislative meddling with wages schedules is in general deprecated. The minimum should be determined, it is said, in most cases by free contact between trade unions and employer's associations—the public authority interfering only to enforce contracts as to the minimum and, in some instances, to establish a minimum rate of wages where the workmen are incapable of doing this for themselves.

It is not difficult to find, as this author does, distressing instances of laborers whose remuneration is shockingly low; neither is there any difficulty in showing that the economic interest of the public (to say nothing of humanitarian considerations) demands for every able-bodied workman a supply of food and other utilities sufficient to maintain him in full vigor. The discussions among economists during the past half century have given no more unmistakable or important result than the conclusion that high wages mean abundant production. This argument as to the desirability of high wages, from the standpoint of the public, Dr. Zwiedeneck gives once more and this is conclusive for that point, though he neglects to make use of the further argument that a rise of wages may take place without detriment to the general interest through an elimination of weaker entrepreneurs and the resulting concentration of industry in the control of stronger men.

Real difficulty begins with this author's attempt to show that this plan for relieving cases of extremely low wages is suited to its purpose. The judicial enforcement of the labor contract is hardly possible in the United States. Here public sentiment would probably not sanction the criminal prosecution of workmen who had left work before the end of the agreed period of employment. The plan would thus

be one-sided if it were realized at all. For this reason employers would not favor a proposal to enact such a law, while even the labor organizations could not be counted on for support, as the sentiment against a violation of the collective bargain with employers is not remarkably strong in trade unions here, and a great part of their members would not care to yield their freedom in this respect. In Germany such a plan might be more successful. There the violation of the labor contract by persons on either side is frequently punished.

If an employer is permitted to dismiss his workmen at discretion, it is possible for him in large measure to defeat the purposes of a minimum rate of wages, by discharging the less efficient under one pretence or another. On the other hand a restriction on the freedom of dismissal is likely to result in shirking by the workmen—as experience with minimum wages rates has already shown. This author proposes an oversight of work by a joint board including representatives of laborers, employers, and the public authority. It is to be feared that this device would fail. One can hardly imagine a more difficult question for judicial decision than the question whether a particular workman has been working with the “fair,” or “reasonable” diligence which entitles him to continue in service. The inspectors could not themselves always observe the men at work and a decision based on the testimony of eyewitnesses would be impossible. In this country, at least, the government member of such a board would probably make his decision conform to a politician’s standard of expediency. Instead of adopting any such device as this it would doubtless be better to depend on the employer’s need of men to prevent, in most instances, the dismissal of fairly competent men. As for those whom employers do not find it advantageous to retain at the rates of wages which the trade unions are able to exact, the suitable agency for dealing with them is the system of organized charity, with its discriminating relief and the more abundant resources which, it is to be hoped, the charity organizations will some day have at their disposal.

The argumentative portion of this work is preceded by a long and somewhat valuable historical account of wages legislation and doctrines relating to wages. One naturally looks for an index with such a mass of facts and citations, but the author has not taken the trouble to provide one.

A. P. WINSTON.